

India Street Neighborhood Study
Obediah Wood House
17 India Street
Nantucket
Nantucket County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-1054

HABS
MASS
10-NANT
75P-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

INDIA STREET NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY
OBEDIAH WOOD HOUSEHABS
MASS
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Location: 17 India Street (on north side), Nantucket
Massachusetts.

Present Owner: Hospital Thrift Shop

Present Occupant: Hospital Thrift Shop

Present Use: Thrift Shop for benefit of Nantucket Cottage Hospital.

Brief Statement
of Significance: Typical example of the large turn of the eighteenth
century house; part of the India Street Neighborhood
Study (MASS-1013).

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1789 -- Obediah Wood, merchant, bought "land together with the tanning sheds thereon" from Josiah Coffin and John Gardner, 2nd, sheriff, for 26 pounds, 15 shillings and 6 pence.
- 1792 -- Peleg Hoxsey and Peleg Macy, tanners, bought from Obediah Wood a "piece of land where Wood carried his tanning business", for 136 pounds, 10 shillings.
- 1794 -- Peleg Macy bought from Peleg Hoxsey his share of land with dwelling house thereon.
- 1794 -- Timothy Horsefield, tinplate worker, and Amy, his wife, bought from Peleg Macy for 135 pounds.
- 1810 -- Nantucket Bank from Timothy Horsefield.
- 1813 -- Sara Horsefield, mother of Timothy who died in 1812, his wife having died the year before, from the Nantucket Bank.
- 1820 -- Charles Barney bought from Horsefield heirs.
- 1826 -- Stephen West, master mariner, from Charles Barney.
- 1840 -- Augustus C. Morse from Stephen West.
- 1895 -- Mary L. Ayers from Augustus C. Morse et al for \$1700.
- 1922 -- Elizabeth Worth Ide and Lilla D. Ide bought from Mary L. Ayers.
- 1945 to date -- Hospital Thrift Shop bought from Frederick C. Ayers, which property had been reclaimed by a foreclosure deed.
(Abstract: Records Registry Deeds,
Nantucket, Massachusetts.)

2. Date of erection: Between 1792 and 1794. (Abstract: deed from Hoxsey to Macy mentions dwelling house for the first time.)
3. Architect: None
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: House was built with two story front and rear and large central chimney as were many Nantucket houses built between 1790 and 1820.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: During the Ayers ownership changes to the interior were made to accommodate paying guests, and at that time and later for convenience in use as a Thrift Shop partitions were removed between rooms, and the fireplaces were closed. The open porch on the east was taken down to make room for a driveway. Several unattractive additions have been added at the back of the house from time to time.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

House is located in that area originally described as the Third Squadron of Wesco Acre Lots, at a place commonly known by the name of Micah's Pond.

Obediah Wood was the son-in-law of the Island physician, Dr. Benjamin Tupper, at whose home Crèvecoeur is said to have been entertained on his visit to Nantucket before writing "Letters from an American Farmer" in 1782. This section of India Street contained several tanning businesses at the time, with Jonathan Macy's tanyard on the north of India Street.

Augustus C. Morse was a teacher in the Nantucket High School which had been established under Cyrus Peirce in February, 1838, by vote of the town. According to Emily Weeks, who wrote about "Development of Nantucket Schools" in Nantucket Historical Association Proceedings of 1903, "the High School held most favorable rank under Mr. Morse" from 1838 until 1855.

The Hospital Thrift Shop was organized in 1930 and has been an active unit for the benefit of the Nantucket Cottage Hospital ever since. In 1945 they purchased this house for a permanent home.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views: 1952 view of house, showing porch in Ninty Five Per Cent Perfect, by Everett U. Crosby, Nantucket: Tetaukimmo Press, 1953; pen and ink drawing on postcard by Ruth Haviland Sutton; drawing in Main Street Fete Booklet 1959, page 23.

Prepared by Mrs. Marie M. Coffin
Nantucket, Massachusetts
July, 1970

PART II. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of the India Street Neighborhood Study (MASS-1013) made in the summer of 1970 by the Historic American Buildings Survey on Nantucket, Massachusetts. This is the fifth summer project of a continuing HABS comprehensive survey of the early architecture and urban design of Nantucket financed by a grant from the Nantucket Historical Trust.

The project was under the general supervision of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Project Director was Professor F. Blair Reeves, A.I.A., of the University of Florida. Historical information was provided by Mrs. Marie M. Coffin of Nantucket, Massachusetts. Photographs are by Jack E. Boucher of Linwood, New Jersey. The material was edited for deposit in the Library of Congress by Mrs. Constance Werner Ramirez, August, 1971.